In 1942 the average annual income of 40 families at the Dresslerville Colony was $664 (Program of the Carson Agency 1944, 184). Incomes have since increased substantially above the 1942 figure. For example, in the summer of 1961 there were three electricians and a painter that commuted from Dresslerville to Reno every work day.

Washo reside today primarily in small shacks in Dresslerville, Carson City, and Reno, Nevada and in Woodfords and Coleville, California. A large number of Washo have married out of the tribe and live in the communities mentioned above or in other parts of Nevada and California.

The general figures on the causes of deaths among Nevada Indians is probably indicative of certain elements in current Washo life (Haglund, et al. 1961, 43-43c). Non-Indians in Nevada have a higher frequency of deaths due to heart diseases and cancer while the Indians have higher death rates in the categories of violence, vehicle accidents, pneumonia, enteritis, tuberculosis, homicide, and suicide. "In the general accident category... Nevada Indian deaths are almost twice the proportion of that of non-Indians in this state. Homicide as a cause of death is five times greater among Nevada Indians than among Indians in other parts of the continental United States."

The following chronology is presented to give an overview of the important events in the history of Washo territory. Several of the events listed have not been settled by historians and may be only approximately correct as stated here. There is little of an ethnohistorical character to this outline, but it does provide a framework for relating changes in Washo economics to the facts of White contact.

1826 - (possibly 1825) Jedediah S. Smith brought a party of some forty trappers down the Humboldt, to the Walker River, and over Walker's Pass into California. In the same year he recrossed the Sierras passing Mono Lake on the way east (Thompson and West 1881).

1833 - Capt. B. L. E. Bonneville sent a trapping (and spying?) party under Joseph R. Walker into Spanish California by way of Pyramid Lake, up the Truckee River, and over the Sierras. Zenas Leonard wrote a diary of this trip (Nevada 1940, 289).

1841 - Capt. J. B. Bartleson took an emigrant party, with John Bidwell and Col. Joseph B. Chiles along, to the Carson and Walker rivers and over the Sierras into California by way of Sonora Pass (Nevada 1940, 289).

1844 - Col. John C. Fremont and his survey party, with Kit Carson along, passed Pyramid Lake, proceeded south through Carson Valley and on

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988 were active workers of malevolence; witches were hapless victims of a condition arising naturally from their age. However, this situation was obscured by the fact that older people were thought to be likely candidates for acquiring wegeléyu. Older people, therefore, were open to charges of sorcery; although innocent, an old person might be on the defensive knowing that he could inadvertently bewitch someone, especially a child or a young person. The belief that older people are more likely to acquire wegeléyu than younger ones is not supported by the testimony of our informants regarding the ages at which known shamans acquired power. Hank Pete's mother acquired her power before marriage, probably before the age of 15; Rupert acquired his as a young man.

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775 Social control among relatives was based on a fear of ghosts rather than sorcery. Relatives who could not be influenced in any other way could be reached by an attempted suicide. The reason is clear: the dead person could become a ghost; hence he would be in a position to threaten the life of his living relatives. The usual method for an attempted suicide was to eat wild parsnip. The poison acts slowly and gives plenty of time to save the victim. The Washo force an emetic down the person's throat and he vomits up the poison.

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[837] The four examples of attempted suicide recounted by our informants were definite attempts at resolving family problems. In one case, a man had been having difficulty with his wife; she was interested in another man. The husband ate wild parsnip, but was saved. As a result his sons brought pressure on the wife and made her behave. The couple stayed together until the husband died. A second case involved trouble between a brother and sister.
[593] The sister had been taking money from the parents, and the brother objected. The girl threatened suicide and the boy said, "Go ahead -- I don't care." The girl took wild parsnip, but not enough to kill her, and she was saved. The parents were very happy to have her revived. After this episode, the son left
[461] home. In the third case a man never wanted to work, and his mother and sister didn't like it. He attempted suicide by hanging, but the rope was too long and his feet touched the floor. A relative cut him down. The suicide attempt frightened his mother and sister and they stopped complaining. The fourth case concerned a woman. Our informant didn't know the reason for her attempt to kill herself, but commented, "It's always family trouble."

762 Our informants described four cases of successful suicide. Of these, three had no connection with social control. One was that of a helpless old man who lived alone and had no relatives. On a return trip from California where the Washo had been gathering acorns, he asked to be abandoned. Another successful suicide was a woman who had lost a daughter whom she loved very much. She ate wild parsnip and died in three hours. The third case, which is probably apocryphal, concerns a shaman who tried unsuccessfully to

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cure his wife. When she died, he broke the taboo against eating salt and died. [263]
The fourth successful case did involve an attempt at social control. A father [784]
and daughter did not get along because the daughter was supporting the father. [626]
The daughter complained and the father threatened suicide. He repeated the
threat a day later and the daughter told him to do whatever he wanted. The
father took his gun and shot himself below the chin. This method of suicide
is not typical and was clearly inappropriate, because it gave the daughter no
chance to change her behavior.

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Hank Pete says that he has heard many threats of suicide and that peo- 626
ple do this, "to scare money from old parents." Pete also says that men at- 562
tempt suicide more often than women, who just leave home when interpersonal
difficulties arise. The destruction of the self is an ultimate threat, and the
fact that men are more likely to invoke it than women indicates a lack of male
authority in Washo culture. This same characteristic of the male role was
revealed in an analysis of role behavior by kinsmen among the modern Washo.
"... Men tend to see their relationships regarding who dominates them as
clearly structured, but are much less clear as to whom they dominate; women
see their relationship with subordinate relatives to be structured almost as
clearly as their relationships with dominant ones. This may be an indication [157]
that Washo males tend to lack self-confidence...." (Freed, 1960, 370). We
believe that the lack of male self-confidence is a modern phenomenon and can-
not be projected into the past. The reason probably is that males have a more [154]
difficult time adjusting to modern conditions than women. This has been noted
in other American Indian hunting-gathering tribes (Hallowell, 1942, 48;
Caudill, 1949, 425). In the case of the Washo, the main difficulties of the men
may be due to seasonal unemployment and lack of economic opportunities. Of
the five cases of violence against the self involving attempts at social control,
three were by men; of these three, two were motivated by complaints by wom-
en that a male relative was making no economic contribution.

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We suspect that among the modern Washo the use of alcoholic beverages 273
has partially replaced the threat of suicide in interpersonal relations. Bertha
Holbrook commented, "Nobody commits suicide today -- instead they begin 177
drinking." Alcohol probably has many functions in modern Washo culture; its
role as a means to control the behavior of relatives is possibly a minor one. 626
If the control of relatives is one of the functions of alcohol, its effectiveness
is based on different culture patterns than is the effectiveness of suicide. Sui-
cide controls through the fear of ghosts; drinking may control through fear of
the direct aggression of the drunken person, especially because the Washo be-
come hostile and aggressive when they are drinking. It is possible that a per-
son may die from overindulgence in alcohol or may be killed in a drunken
brawl and thus become a ghost, but this is infrequent and therefore a minor
consideration.

> "Individual Peyotists accuse one another of causing sickness or death under guidance of malicious spirits, or of secretly making use of Peyotist ritual, song, and medicine as a screen for acquiring personal advantage in 'the old way.' . . . Deaths of members or too-frequent failure to cure result in suspicion and the eventual rejection of a leader."

Again, Peyote singers carried on a rivalry with one another which "seems to be one means by which hostility is expressed among Peyotists" (Merriam and d'Azevedo, 1957, 625).

Peyotism, however, had failed to take hold, in Dresslerville at least, by the time of our field study. The members of this community did not appear to have had sufficient time to work out effective means for redirecting their aggressions in a socially acceptable manner.

Instead the aggression was internalized, the very thing that canalization is believed able to avoid.[1] This internalization was evident in certain self-destructive activities, though in each case the evidence was questionable and may be accepted only with qualification. Such evidence includes the high incidence of heavy drinking, though a comparative measure with the 1930's was lacking; the increasing harshness of the socialization process, though "taking it out" on one's children as an indication of internalized aggression is open to question; and a decreasing interest in tribal affairs, which could be interpreted as a lack of concern by the Washo about themselves and their future. The fact that many young men had left the community may also be an indication of internal conflicts that they were unable to resolve in any satisfactory manner. Suicide, of course, would have been a clear measure of such a conclusion, but, again, records were not available for comparison between the 1930's and the time of our study.

We can thus tentatively conclude, given the nature of our evidence, that Nadel's suggestion, that witchcraft beliefs impede the integration of a society and add to the stress of social life, does not appear to hold true for the Washo case.

In this paper, the cultural changes that took place among the Washo over a 15-year period were used to support the contention that witchcraft beliefs may fulfill a positive function in displacing aggressions. Support for this conclusion was drawn from the consequences of the elimination of "bad" shamans. We also attempted to demonstrate how education may be considered as an intervening variable between frustrations and the socially acceptable means for releasing aggressions. The significance of cultural transmission from one generation to the next has always been implicit in any

[1] [footnote appears on p. 66 -- Analyst]

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[824] Suicide was sometimes accomplished by eating Western Water Hemlock (dímeʔ dé·guš).[6] Hank Pete related a modern double suicide. "Up at Coleville at a rodeo a young lady killed herself with a pistol in the head when she was refused money by her grandmother. The mother of the girl killed herself when she heard about her daughter. They saw her going down to the river. They thought she was going to jump in. Instead, she ate some wild parsnip that grows there. It took her about an hour and a half to die. That's the only time I've heard of Indian suicide. There have been a lot of killings."

764 There was a great amount of variation in disposing of the dead. They could be left where they fell if they died away from camp, buried, cremated, put up in a tree, in a hollow log, or left in the house where they died. The most common means seems to have been burial with the body extended. A trench big enough for the body and about 2 to 3 ft. deep was dug with digging sticks. Baskets were used to place the dirt to one side. The body was prepared by male relatives, but any person could do the job. The body was laid flat on its back. Some of the property of the deceased and gifts of food were laid in with him. The whole was covered over with dirt and a pile of stones. The deceased was dressed in his own clothes and wrapped in his own blanket. Harry Hawkins, an elderly white resident from Woodfords, California, said he often saw the Washo wrap the deceased in a bearskin robe for burial. The remainder of the property of the deceased was broken up and thrown away, or burned. Those who participated in the burial would wash themselves afterward.

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764 The house of the deceased was usually torn down and left to rot. It was occasionally burned, sometimes with the deceased and his property inside. The latter practice was more common during the winter when the hard ground and snow prohibited burial.

764 Hank Pete (born about 1884) told of a winter burial he saw as a youth. "They burned out the stump of a tree and dragged the body there and wrapped him up in some hide and got willows to tie him up and put him in there. His legs were in the hole and his head was up. He froze there. Later they saw the magpies were after him so they threw brush and rocks on top of him."

Lowie (1939, 310) related that "All used to dance around the fire and cry. They would put sagebrush two to three feet high and place the corpse on top. The clothes of the deceased were hidden lest anyone wearing them
[765] should fall sick. . . . According to Bill, the Washo sometimes -- but not very often -- burned the corpse, putting it on a pile of brush. In the latter event the bones were subsequently interred."

6. Literally "water sweet potatoes", Cicuta douglasii. (Juanita Schubert, personal communication)